



# M E D I A   R E L E A S E

STATE OF TENNESSEE  
BUREAU OF TENNCARE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **TENNCARE ENROLLEES AUTO-ENROLLED IN MEDICARE PART D**

MEDICALLY NEEDED "DUALS" HAVE COMPREHENSIVE COVERAGE THROUGH FEDS

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — TennCare enrollees covered by the federal government's Medicare plan have been auto-enrolled in the new "Part D" pharmacy coverage effectively moving all their healthcare coverage from TennCare to Medicare January 1, 2006.

"These enrollees have their pharmacy bills paid for by TennCare while the federal government has always paid their medical bills. The good news is, even though Medicare is changing the way dual eligibles get their prescriptions paid for, TennCare has been able to "auto-enroll" them in the federal program so they will not see any break in their coverage without having to go through another enrollment process," said J.D. Hickey, TennCare Director. "These 25,000 people will have comprehensive coverage in January from the federal government, effectively opening up slots for other Tennesseans who could be eligible as medically needy in the future. It simply does not make sense for TennCare to pay for healthcare coverage that the federal government is also providing these individuals."

The administration preserved coverage for 97,000 TennCare enrollees who are in the optional Medicaid category medically needy. Medically needy enrollees who have Medicare and Medicaid have used TennCare primarily for pharmacy coverage. So far, 25,000 whose 12-months of TennCare coverage is up have received TennCare's letter explaining Medicaid will end. Tomorrow, these enrollees will start to receive notices from TennCare about their pharmacy coverage through Medicare. Starting January 1, Medicare will pay for prescriptions as well as medical care. TennCare is not allowed by federal law to pay for services already covered by the federal government.

"Medically needy TennCare enrollees who have Medicare should be reassured from letters they received from the federal government earlier explaining their new comprehensive health insurance coverage under Medicare Part D," explained Patti Killingsworth, TennCare Assistant Commissioner for Administration. "Medicare will provide their pharmacy coverage instead of TennCare going forward, and offer low-income subsidy programs with zero premium and deductible options."

TennCare is Tennessee's expanded Medicaid program, providing health insurance coverage to 1.2 million Tennesseans including 640,000 children. For more information about the TennCare program or to access this news release online, visit <http://www.tennessee.gov/tenncare/>

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STATE CAPITOL, 1ST FLOOR  
NASHVILLE, TN 37243  
615.741.2401